5: Bourne T-S (1849)1874
SHS Tehuelche SHS

last argument was decisive, and she kept her huge mouth closed for the night. There was a silent pause for some minutes, and, without another word, we ranged ourselves for repose. I thought the old heathen's consciences troubled him through the night; his sleep was broken, and he appeared very restless. Early the next morning he went to the lodge of the newly-married pair, and had a long chat with them. They thought him rather severe upon them at first; but, after a good deal of diplomacy, a better understanding was brought about. The young people could hardly get over a sense of the indignities they had received; but in the course of the day they returned, leg and luggage, to the old chief's tent, and made it their permanent abode.

We now moved in a westerly direction, and on the way succeeded in capturing a good deal of game. Their mode of dealing with the carcase of the guanaco is enough to dissipate whatever appetising qualities the meat — in itself very palatable — would otherwise possess. It was no uncommon circumstance, while the squaws were removing the hide, to see the dogs tugging at the other extremity, the women, meantime, crying out "Eh! Ah!" in a dissuasive, though not angry, tone. If the animals become too audacious, the ire of their mistresses is kindled, and they break out with "Cashcrow cashsky!" a phrase equivalent to that which, in English, directs its object to a region unmentionable in mere polite.

The Indians have, strictly speaking, no profane expressions. I never could learn that they worshipped or had any idea of a Supreme Being. The only observance which bore any aspect of religion was associated with something we

All the harbors of this coast there is an abundance of birds: both seabirds and amphibious ones, such as ducks, seagulls, cormorants, shearlins, boobies, snow shearwaters and penguins. There are also some swans, and inland there are partridges, sparrows and some dark colored birds with red breasts; there are also vultures and all kinds of birds of prey. Foxes and black-and-white skunks abound, the urine which the latter give off having the most vile smelling odor imaginable, extending over an enormous area. From the Santa Cruz river south to the Straits there are a few deer.

The climate here is cold, but it keeps to a regular seasonal cycle; it rains but little. The winds usually blow from the north, west or south, and are ordinarily violent and make the region uncomfortable, but they are very healthful.

The Indians in these quarters are all of one nation; they are tall, their height varying from six feet to nine spans[for the men, there rarely being any taller than this. The women are not so tall, but are enough so in proportion to their sex. All are handsome, and among the women there are some who are very good-looking and white skinned, although tanned by the wind and sun like the men. There is not to be found a thin man or woman, neither are they all thick-set in proportion to their height, which, combined with their habit of going about enveloped in skins from neck to feet, very possibly have contributed to the reports of travelers that they were giants.

Their language is guttural and they are in the habit of repeating the same word over and over in their conversations. They do not interrupt the one who may be speaking even though [48] his speech lasts all day. Ordinarily the speaker is one of greater authority than the others present, or else of greater eloquence. The women do not speak among the men unless questioned, and then they only answer the question. Those who speak often without expression and inwardly are not well considered, and are not even listened to.

The dress of the men is made of guanaco, skunk or bare skins, six feet square, the fur turned inward and the hide painted red, green or yellow. This garment covers them from neck to feet in such a way that only rarely does one see any part of the body other than the arms, and these only when they are in use. They wear also another garment under the outer one, of very soft leather, tied at the waist with a thong, which covers the belly and reaches halfway down the thighs, from which place it tapers to a point which reaches as far as the ankles. Their feet are covered with hide which they secure with thongs; this footgear is of ox hide if they can procure it, and if not, then of the hide of a horse or of a full-grown [Ca. ps. ox find very value.-Randolph]